

Remarks/Arguments:

This is a response to the final rejection dated May 31, and follows an interview with the examiner on September 11. The interview summary is correct; it was agreed that amended claim 1 is novel over the applied references.

Claim 1 has been amended by correcting grammar and adding subparagraph indentations for clarity.

The presently claimed invention is a complete system or installation, wherein two or more different application devices (applying a different application principle) can be interchangeably mounted on the installation. That is, one type of application device may be separably mounted as a replacement for the other. Simply by exchanging these application devices, the installation can be used easily with different application principles such as screen printing or gravure printing, or the like.

The general principle is shown in Figure 1 of the present application: Only the small units 5, 51 and 52 are replaced (thus allowing three different application principles) whereas the entire remainder of the installation (including the counter roller 4) remains unchanged.

Claim 1 explicitly requires at least one further (separate) modular application device which can be separably mounted as a replacement for the application device.

One of the important elements of the invention is that the deflection or pressure roller (which can be used with both application devices) remains on the processing installation, as recited in claim 1. This design allows switching between different application principles easily and with the exchange of as few components as necessary.

Pankake discloses a coating apparatus having a number of rolls. One feature of the apparatus is that the roll pedestals 100 can be easily replaced with others having different mechanical characteristics. This is for the express purpose of changing natural frequencies to reduce vibration and enable the machine to be run at different speeds. While the pedestals may be replaced, there is no disclosure or suggestion that one would also replace the applicators with applicators of a different type or principle when replacing the pedestals. That is, Pankake fails to disclose “at least one second modular application device applying a different application principle, wherein the second application device can be separably mounted as a replacement for the application device”, as recited in claim 1.

Tashima discloses a coating apparatus having plural coating devices of different types; the different coating devices are on the apparatus at the same time, and perform their jobs in parallel. However, there is no disclosure or suggestion that one might make the various devices modular and physically replace one with another of a different type.

The examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider claim 1. We believe the claims are patentable over the prior art of record, and that this application is in proper form for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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